



A Shapely Future

The Air Force is combating a weighty issue. Too many service members are heavy. Although most people consider the military to be lean and fit, a surprising fifty-four percent (54%) of active duty members are either overweight or obese. This is shockingly similar to the 64.5% overweight or obese within the U.S. population. Although obesity is significantly lower among active duty compared to the U.S., the impact of excess weight is costly.

Why be concerned? The rising incidence and array of consequences associated with being overweight and obese pose serious problems for both the nation and the U. S. Air Force. Just consider the facts known about excess weight. Obesity is associated with type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, certain types of cancer, heart disease, and depression. Individuals who are obese based on body mass index have a 50 to 100% increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight. Even moderate weight excess (10 to 20 pounds for a person of average height) increases the risk of death, particularly among adults aged 30 to 64 years. Over 300,000 deaths each year are attributed to obesity. According to the Surgeon General, the economic cost of this disease in 2000 was 117 billion dollars!

Excess weight is the leading predictor of low fitness for men within the Air Force, regardless of any other behavioral factor. Each year, the Air Force spends about 28 million dollars on medical costs and productivity losses, not to mention loss of valuable airmen who do not maintain weight and body fat standards. The key to stopping this epidemic is prevention!

For each individual, body weight is the result of a combination of genetic, metabolic, behavioral, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic influences. Behavioral and environmental factors offer the greatest opportunities for change. Armed with this information, and a mission to prevent weight gain, Air Force health and wellness experts have developed

Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!™ in an effort to *prevent* weight gain. This is a truly innovative campaign, as reflected in the logo and slogan.

Shape Your Future... signifies the vision that all individuals have the power to ‘get and stay in shape’ and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight will shape an individual’s future by decreasing health risks and enhancing fitness, confidence, and readiness. **Your Weigh!** implies that a unique, healthy weight exists for every individual and maintenance of that weight is important. **Your Weigh!** means there are a variety of healthful and effective methods to choose from to reach and maintain that weight and it is all about the individual and the personal path chosen to follow!

Due to the magnitude of the problem, it is highly unlikely this epidemic of weight gain will be resolved in the near future. The intent of the *Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!™* campaign is to implement progressive phases, each targeting different aspects of military life that may impact weight gain and its prevention. Future phases of the campaign will focus on community commitment to a healthy environment by employing a roadmap to assess base efforts in supporting healthy weights and lifestyle. Recognizing and offering helpful solutions to factors which often contribute to weight gain, such as deployments, injuries, and stress may make it easier to reach the goal of achieving or maintaining a healthy weight.

Once fully implemented, the *Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!™* campaign will provide the missing link between awareness and action necessary to maintain a fit and healthy force, ready to face the current and future demands of the AF. This responsibility lies not with a select group of members but with each individual member. *Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!™* is designed to make this goal an individualized reality. For more information on *Shape Your Future...Your Weigh!™* or weight gain prevention, contact your local Health and Wellness

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